

Headline	Serving up good English in Singapore		
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Serving up good English in S'pore

"SORRY ah, I donch know."

Poor English like this commonly used phrase is the target of this year's Speak Good English Movement, which will focus on improving the English spoken by cabbies, shop assistants, waiters and others in the service industry.

The National Library Board, the Society For Reading And Literacy and several other organisations will conduct programmes for those who do not speak the language well or at all.

Citing figures from last year's Manpower Ministry Labour Market report, Acting Manpower Minister Ng Eng Hen, who launched the campaign yesterday at The Arts House at the Old Parliament House, said 64 per cent of job vacancies in the private sector are in the service industry.

And, a survey by the Singapore Tourism Board showed that there will be 4,000 openings in the hotel sector alone by year-end, indicating that

the service sector will continue to grow and is poised to fuel the economy.

This is why, he said, it is important that service staff speak well. Doing so, he added, would make a good impression on visitors and a good example for Singaporeans.

Parents and teachers, too, should try and speak the language well so they can be role models for their children, he added.

Activities to promote good English will be held throughout the year. In one, women wanting to learn the language to speak to their children in it can take free classes through the Women Learning English (Wish) programme at 12 community centres.

Over the next two months, there will be talks at selected libraries on the importance of reading aloud, and on using English to communicate with one's family, among others.

For more information, visit www.goodenglish.org.sg